

REMARKS

The Office Action dated January 7, 2005, has been noted and its contents carefully studied.

The Examiner's allowance of Claim 28 and indication of allowable subject matter in the form of Claims 9, 10, 12-20 and 22 is gratefully acknowledged.

With respect to the objection to the drawings, as required in paragraph 1 of the Office Action, new corrected drawings (formal drawings) in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are attached hereto. Acknowledgement of receipt of the drawings and approval thereof is courteously requested.

Turning now to the claim objections, it is noted that Claims 7, 8 and 9 have been amended in the manner proposed by the Examiner. Accordingly, it is believed that the objection to these claims can now be withdrawn.

In addition to the foregoing amendments, it is noted that Claim 12, which was indicated to be allowable, has been canceled and rewritten as new independent Claim 29. The claims dependent from Claim 12 have now been amended to depend either directly or indirectly from Claim 29. The claims which depend, either directly or indirectly, from Claim 29 are Claims 13-20. Accordingly, it is respectfully urged that Claim 29 and Claims 13-20 are clearly allowable for the reasons set forth in the Office Action.

Turning now to the rejection of the remaining claims, to facilitate the Examiner's reconsideration, the invention will briefly be again restated herein.

In one aspect as set forth in Claim 1, the invention is directed to a refrigerator. The refrigerator includes a thermally insulating housing defining an internal area cooled by circulation of cooling air. In order to pass the cooling air into the internal area of the housing, a hollow body is disposed in the internal area and bounds (defines) a flow channel for guiding the cooling air. Cooled item supports are

disposed in the internal area and supported on the hollow body. In another aspect as set forth in independent Claim 27, the hollow body has a plurality of holders disposed along at least one vertical line for holding the cooled item supports with suspension hooks engaging the holders to hold the cooled item supports in the internal area.

It is respectfully urged that the invention as recited in these claims in its broadest aspects, as well as the dependent claims, is not anticipated by or made obvious from the cited references as will become more clearly evident from the following detailed discussion of these references, which is presented herein for the Examiner's consideration.

Japanese Patent Abstract Publication No. 11241880A to Iguchi et al.

Japanese Patent Abstract Publication No. 11241880A to Iguchi et al (hereinafter "Iguchi") merely discloses an open showcase which has a heat insulating wall opening forward, the inside of which is partitioned to form a storage chamber and a duct 11. A cooler is disposed in the duct and supplies chilled air through a fan into the storage chamber 9, which includes a plurality of stages of shelf units. Each shelf unit includes left and right brackets which are engaged with a strut.

In this regard, all that Iguchi teaches is the conventional prior art including all of the problems, which are addressed by Applicants' claimed invention. More specifically, the open showcase 1 is nothing more than a complex construction of a thermally insulating housing defining an internal area cooled by circulation of cooling air. Insulating wall 6 of Iguchi is part of that insulating housing and the housing is assembled in a complex construction, which includes a partition wall, which forms a storage chamber 9 and the duct 11. As such, this has nothing

to do with the specifically defined hollow body disposed in the internal area, which is separate from the structure of the thermally insulating housing, and is received in the internal area of the thermally insulating housing to provide a flow channel for guiding cooling air.

Moreover, the cooled item supports in Iguchi are supported by the partition of the thermally insulating housing defining the flow channel 11, i.e., the back wall of the housing, and there is no teaching or suggestion in Iguchi of having a way to support cooled items supports in a hollow body as recited in Claim 1. Yet still further, as recited in Claim 2, the hollow body is disposed in contact with a first wall of the internal area of the housing, and as further recited, the first wall is a rear wall of the internal area.

As will be readily apparent, other features of the dependent claims which depend from Claim 1 are also not taught by Iguchi, because Iguchi fails to teach the hollow body as recited in the independent claims, and the other features of the dependent claims further modify in various aspects, the combination of the thermally insulating housing having the hollow body disposed therein.

U.S. Patent No. 3,169,383 to Morton et al.

U.S. Patent No. 3,169,383 to Morton et al. (hereinafter "Morton") also fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. All that Morton teaches is a thermally insulated housing having an internal area cooled by circulating air. Whereas the Examiner has characterized element 48 as being a hollow body disposed in the internal area and bounding a flow channel, a closer review of the reference clearly reveals that the element referred to is nothing more than an evaporator shroud which is a corrugated metal sheet which sides are held in side guide channels as part of the construction of the thermally insulated housing to cooperate with evaporator 51,

and with cool air passing on both sides of the evaporator 51 on one side adjacent to the shroud 48 and on the other side adjacent to the back liner of the thermally insulated housing.

As such, Morton fails to teach or suggest a specifically recited hollow body disposed in the internal area and bounding a flow channel for guiding the cooling air. Morton instead teaches a very complex arrangement for guiding cool air in thermally insulated housing which has multiple channels created as part thereof including channels 58 and 33 which make up part of meat pan 46.

With respect to the dependent claims, they are not anticipated or obvious from Morton for the same reasons given with respect to Iguchi. Thus for the sake of brevity, they will not be discussed further herein.

U.S. Patent No. 4,190,305 to Knight et al.

U.S. Patent No. 4,190,305 to Knight et al. (hereinafter "Knight") adds nothing more than teaching the use of a stiffener for structural support. In this regard, with respect to the rejection of Claim 6 over the combination of Morton and Knight, it is noted that there is no reason to modify the rear wall of Morton by adding a stiffener since there is no hollow body that needs to be secured to that rear wall. Morton instead teaches a complex structure for the rear wall which includes the flow passage for the chilled air and again, as urged previously fails to teach or suggest the claimed hollow body of Applicants' Claims 1 and 27, and including other features thereof as recited in the dependent claims.

Japanese Patent Abstract Publication No. 11257830A to Hamada et al.

Japanese Patent Abstract Publication No. 11257830A to Hamada et al. (hereinafter "Hamada") also fails to add

anything to the teachings of the other references and fails to render obvious Applicants' claimed invention. More specifically, Claim 26 has been rejected in light of the combination of Iguchi and Hamada. In this regard, Hamada merely teaches a further modification of the open showcase or thermally insulating housing of Iguchi in which chilled passages are formed in shelf units. Conversely, Claim 26 is directed to the hollow body having air passage openings with actuator controlled closure shutters fitted to the openings for selectively closing the air passages, and to prevent air from passing therethrough into the thermally insulated housing.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully urged that all of the claims clearly define patentable subject matter under 35 U.S.C §103. Claims 29 and 13-20 are clearly allowable as defining allowable subject matter in independent claim form with the dependent claims dependent from an allowable claim. Claim 28 has already been allowed. The remaining claims, it is respectfully urged are also allowable for the reasons set forth herein in the discussion of the cited references made with reference to the claimed invention.

If the Examiner has any questions or further objections regarding the claims, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned.

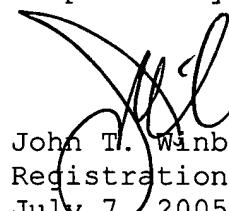
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Name of Attorney Signing

Under 37 CFR 1.34

Respectfully submitted

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings are replacements for Figures 1-16 as formal drawings as required. The sheets, which include Figures 1-16, replace the original sheets.

Attachments: Replacement Sheets